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The Impact of the Internet on Teenagers' Face-to-Face Communication

Nuhu Diraso Gapsiso Ph.D, Joseph Wilson Ph.D

Department of Mass Communication, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria

Corresponding author: Nuhu Diraso Gapsiso, Department of Mass Communication, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria

Abstract: The Introduction of the Internet appeared to have changed the process of communication from interpersonal to computer mediated communication. This study examined the Impact of Internet on face-to-face communication in Comprehensive Secondary School, College of Education Hong. The objectives include: to examine the relationship between Internet Use and Teenager's face-to-face communication, to find out whether internet usage is weakening their desire for face-to-face communication. The study found out that the use of internet have some impact on face-to-face communication between teenager's and their friends and also appears to weaken the ties that bind them with family and friends. The study concludes that Internet use by the teenagers has reduced the time they spend engaging in face-to-face communication with their friends and family members because of the time spent on the internet.

Keywords: Internet, teenagers, face-to-face, communication.

Introduction

The advent of Internet has significantly influenced the process of communication, especially as it relates to Interpersonal (face-to-face) communication. Computer mediated communication now dominates the global communication process. Person-to-person communication has turned out to be the primary use of computer networks and has transformed them into a social space where people connect with one another (Harasim, 1994: 15).

Fulk and Ryu (1990); Williams and Rice (1983), noted that, no field of human life has been more affected by the internet than the way people communicate with each other. Previous generations of communications technologies changed the way people lived. In this way, interpersonal relationships have experienced a transformation through new technologies, such as the Internet. Relationships that previously were established and sustained mainly through face-to-face interaction have come to be complemented by a social technology that is creating a new type of interpersonal relationship (Merkle and Richardson, 2000).

Corroborating this, Chesebrow and Bonsell (1989) argued that the internet is altering how, if, and when people talk to each other in all social systems and even in the privacy of the American home. The same scenario seem to be playing out in Nigeria, with school children depending more on the internet to communicate with family and friends. The internet as noted by Shim (2007) is fundamentally changing human communication.

Shim (2007) has raised a legitimate question: Is the internet displacing or supplanting face-to-face communication particularly among family members and friends. Considering the importance of face-to-face communication in social life, the question should have been extensively examined, but surprisingly, few studies have been done and none of these studies have gone beyond scratching the surface by concentrating on the benefits of internet. Only few scholars, such as (Nie and Erbring, 2010) have gone beyond the usual new media vs. traditional media displacement to explore the relationship between internet use and interpersonal communication with family members.

Today, teenagers spent most of their time on the internet, chatting, interacting and establishing cordial and strong relationship with people sometimes thousands of kilometres away. While most of them maintain regular contact with their far away internet family through the internet, their interaction and personal communication level with their immediate family and friends are very weak. A more alarming possibility is

that youths avoid spending time with their parents and instead prefer to surf the internet. Youths within the same location or the same apartment a times prefer to communicate with one another through e-mail instead of meeting one another face-to-face. It is true that the internet has become a powerful medium of communication (Matusitz, 2007).

The heart of this research work is to investigate the impacts of the internet on Teenagers' face-to-face communication; this study examines how Senior Secondary School Students of the Comprehensive Secondary School, College of Education, Hong rely on Internet than face to face communication while communicating with each other.

Statement of the Problem

The internet appears to have played prominent role in human communication. Several studies have being conducted on the impact of communication on face-to-face communication in Europe and America. These studies includes: Shim (2007) study on the Impact of Internet on Interpersonal Communication at Carbondale Community High School in Carbondale. CuberAtlas (2000) on "Teens prefer Internet to telephone" and Nie and Erbring (2000); Kraut et al. (1998) who found that, the more people used the Internet, the lonelier they felt and the less they engaged in interpersonal communication, even with their family members. In spite of this, there appears to be a dearth of research in Nigeria on the impact of the internet on face-to-face communication amongst teenagers. This research work is therefore designed to investigate the impacts of the internet on teenagers' face-to-face communication as well as finding out whether the use of the internet is linked to a possible decrease in teenagers' desire for face to face communication.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the impacts of the internet on the Teenagers face-to-face communication in Comprehensive Secondary School, College of Education, Hong. The objectives of the study include:

- i. to find out whether the use of internet has reduced the time spent interacting with family members.
- ii. to find out whether internet usage has reduced their face-to-face interaction with friends
- iii. to determine why communication through the internet is more appealing to teenagers than face-to-face communication.
- iv. to determine whether the use of internet has decreased their desire for fact-to-face communication with family.

Research Questions

- i. Does the use of internet by teenagers decreased the time spent interacting with the family?
- ii. Has internet use by teenagers reduced their face-to-face interaction with friends?
- iii. Why communication through the internet is more appealing to teenagers than face-to-face communication?
- iv. Does the use of internet decrease teenager's desire for face-to-face communication?

Brief Historical Background of the Study Area

The approval for the establishment of the Comprehensive Secondary School, College of Education, Hong was given by the Honourable Commissioner for Education, Adamawa State on the 16th of February, 1998 but due to some problem according to the school's vice principal-Pastor John Daniel, the school did not take off till 2006. The persistence agitations of the staff of the College of Education, Hong for a befitting secondary school to accommodate their children graduating from the staff nursery and primary school led to the establishment of the school. The school right from its inception operates as a day school. The first set of 40 students-19 boys and 21 girls were admitted in 2006 with 11 academic staff who also taught at the primary section.

Presently, the school has graduated 3 sets of students at the senior level (i.e. SSS 3). The total students enrolment stood at 347 out of which 216 are in junior level (JSS) while 131 are in the senior level (SSS). Right from its inception, the number of girls is always higher than the boys. For instance, the present record for the school shows that 154 are male while 193 are female. The school is well staffed with a total of 27 academic staff and 20 non academic staff.

The school was considered suitable for this research work-investigating the impacts of the internet on teenagers' face-to-face communication because it has access to internet facility owned by the College of Education Hong. There is also the availability of mobile internet services provided telecommunication companies such as MTN, Globalcom, Airtel and Etisalat. Furthermore, most of the students at the senior level are already on the facebook and regularly connect to the internet through their mobile phone and thereby maintaining regular contact with their internet friends. Being a day school, all students live with their parents and therefore have natural opportunity of engaging in face-to-face communication with their immediate family members and friends. The

researcher intends to use the senior students for this research because they are all teenagers.

Literature Review

The Internet has not only expanded our understanding of human interaction, our meaning of the word community, and our social network but has also expands our horizons, minds, and capabilities to organise new ways to incorporate our offline experiences into cyberspace. The implications that the Internet holds for human communication are huge; and everything is just a mouse-click away. No wonder the Internet is the world's fastest growing communication medium.

Internet Technology as a Modern Means of Communication

According to Kristyna (2011) Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the Standard Internet Protocol Suites (TCP/IP) to serve billions of users worldwide. It is a network of networks that consists of millions of private, public, academic business and government networks of local to global scope that are linked by a broad array of wireless and optical networking technologies. The Internet, according to her carries a vast range of information resources and services such as the interlinked hypertexts documents of the World Wide Web (www) and the infrastructure to support electronic mail.

Most traditional communication media including telephone, music, films and television are reshaped or redefined by the Internet giving birth to a new services such as Voice Over Internet (VoIP) and IPTV Newspaper, book and other print publishing are adapting to website technology, or are reshaped in to blogging and web feeds. The Internet as noted by Carolyn (2000) has enabled or accelerated new forms of human interactions through instant messaging.

The Internet, also called the "virtual world" or "cyberspace" according to Matusitz (2005) is both an environment and a complex system that is created and architected for the act of signification to take place (Matusitz, 2007) sees the Internet as a combination of textual interactions and virtual worlds that enable global communication among humans. Among the many ways of communication that cyberspace offers, Multi-Users Domains (MUDs), e mail chat lines and virtual reality simulation are notorious examples.

Matusitz (2007) noted that one of the main concerns for the past ten years has been that the Internet has fundamentally influenced social interactions among humans, to such a point that, for some of them, the 'techno- culture' (that is, the set of computer mediated

relationships among individuals) is the only culture that they know and identify with. Humans, by nature, grow through social interaction that takes place in a social setting. Sochiano (1999) noted that, the implications of accessing the Internet for the amount and quality of human interaction however can be profound. Not only can the opportunities for human interaction on the Internet develop a sense of immersion and social; engagement far different from whatever sensory or motor realism can provide but, also, our collective behaviour has changed as a result of instant or anonymous interactions as it is in cyberspace. The internet is fast becoming a natural background part of everyday life. In 2002, more than 600 million people worldwide had access to the internet and over 3.7 Billion Internet User in the World in 2015 (Manasians, 2003; Statista, 2015). Turow & Kavenough (2003) noted that children now grow up with the Internet, they and future generation will take it for granted just as they do now to television and the telephone. Supporting this assertion, Gross et al (2002) noted that in California 13 year-olds use their home computer and mobile phones to chat and exchange instant messages with their school friends.

According to (Bargh and McKenna, 2004) no one today disputes the fact that the Internet is likely to have significant impacts on social life, but there remains substantial disagreement as to the nature and values of this impact. Several scholars have contended that Internet communication is an impoverished and sterile form of social exchange compared to traditional face-to-face interactions. And will therefore produce negative outcomes such as loneliness and depression for its users as well as weaken the neighbourhood and community ties.

While McKenna and Bargh (2000), opined that media reporting of the effects of Internet use over the years has consistently emphasized this negative view to the point that, as a result, minority of (mainly older) adults refuses to use Internet at all. However, others believe that the Internet affords a new and different avenue of social interaction that enables groups and relationship to form otherwise would not be able to, thereby increasing and enhancing social connectivity. The advent of the Internet was welcome by some as a panacea while others fear that it is a curse, all would agree that it is quite capable of transforming society. Hardnosed and dispassionate observers have recently concluded that the Internet and its related technologies;

“...will change almost every aspect of our lives...private, social, cultural, economic and political... because (they) deal with the very essence of human society; communication between people. Earlier technologies, from printing to the telegraph... have wrought big

change over time. But the social changes over the coming decades are likely to be much more extensive, and happen much faster, than any in the past because the technologies driving them continue to develop at a break neck pace. More importantly, they look as if together they will be as pervasive and ubiquitous as electricity” (Manasian, 2003).

The Concept of Face-to-Face Communication

The concept of face-to- face interaction according to Nardi and Whittaker (2008) has been of great interest to scholars since at least the early 20th century. One of the earliest social science scholars to analyse this type of interaction was Sociologist Georg Simmel who in his 1908 book observed that sensory organs play an important role in interaction, discussing examples of human behaviour such as an eye contact. Face-to-face communication as noted by Christopher (2008) is one of the basic elements of the social system, forming a significant part of individual’s socialisation and experience gaining throughout one’s life time. Similarly, it is also central to the organisation and development of various groups and organisation composed of those individuals.

Despite the advent of many new information and communication technologies, face-to-face communication is still widespread and popular. Nardi and Whittaker (2002) noted that many theorists imply that face-to-face communication particularly in the context of the media richness theory where face-to-face communication is described as the efficient and informative one. This, according to them is explained due to the fact that face-to-face communication engages more human senses than mediated communication. Corroborating this view, Mills et al (2006) remarked that face-to- face interaction is the most effective form of verbal communication when the sender wants to persuade or motivate the receiver. Emmitt and Gorse (2006) also declared that, face-to- face interaction is still considered the preferred method for resolving problems and contentious issues. The fundamental truth is that, nothing can replace the value of face-to-face communication. Acacio (2012) recognised the followings as some of the ingredients that distinguish the face-to-face communications among other forms of communication;

- i. Effectiveness of meaning-Things gets done when there is an issue that requires a decision. Face-to-face interaction enables people to reach conclusion more quickly. One simple five minutes face-to face interaction would eliminate 15 minutes back and forth e mail. When there are many people in a meeting there

with face-to-face communication, there will be more energy and opportunities to participate and creatively contribute.

- ii. Non-verbal communication-Reacting and adjusting to non-verbal ones, someone who is frequently checking his wristwatch or yearning would tell you very easily that it is time to wrap things up.
- iii. Personal touch-Face-to face interaction enabled personal touch that enhances the feeling of community; sense of belonging and deeper sense of appreciation is expressed with ease through the personal touch.

Computer mediated communication(CMC) is not conducted face-to-face, but in the absence of non-verbal features of communication such as tone of voice, facial expression, and potentially influential interpersonal features such as physical attractiveness skin colour, gender and so on. Much of the extant computer science and communication research has explained how the absence of those features affects the process and outcome of social interactions (McKenna and Bargh, 2000).

Implications of the Internet for Face-to-Face Communication

The implications of accessing the Internet for the amount and quality of human interaction as observed by Matusitz (2007) can be profound. In fact, not only can the opportunities for human interactions on the Internet develop a sense of immersion and social engagement far different from whatever sensory or motor realism can provide (Schiano, 1999),but, also, our collective behaviour has changed as a result of instant or anonymous interaction as it is in cyberspace.

This, in effect, can diminish the quality of human interaction in normal, physical settings. The more people rely on the Internet to interact with others, the less they engage in normal face-to-face conversation with people or the less competent they become at communicating with others which has negative impacts on the quality of human interactions (McKenna, Green and Gleason 2002). Another negative implication according to Matusitz (2007) is that some features of line interaction would never exist in the real world. On the Internet, any user can deceive anybody else without being detected. One can easily swap gender, race, and age in order to reach goals that would not be achievable in normal life. Nie and Erbring (2000) and Krant et al (1989) found that the more people used the Internet the lonelier they felt and the less they engaged in interpersonal communication, even with their family members.

On the positive impacts of the Internet on social Interaction with family and friends, Kraut, et al 2002, Lee and Kuo, 2002) noted that studies suggesting negative impacts of

Internet use on people outnumber those that reported beneficial influences of Internet use. If the Internet use is associated with decreased desire for face-to-face communication even with the family members and also friends, Internet users may be losing some of the most important aspect of their life; family relationships and friendships.

Negative Effects of the Internet on Teenagers

Whitney (2014) noted that the people deny the important role the Internet now plays in everyday life. People of all ages use the Internet to find information, communicate, be entertained and care for financial matters. Teenagers are no exception, since most of them have access to the Internet at home, at school, at the public library or on their cell phone, parents should be aware can negatively affect their teens.

A more alarming possibility according to Shim (2007) is that teenagers avoid spending time with their parents and instead prefer to surf the Internet could be destroying the basic fabric of human society, or family and community relationships. Studies found that youths of high school; age used the Internet more than any other age group (UCLA Centre for Communication Policy, 2003). In addition, empirical evidence shows that the quality of communication between children and parents significantly affects family relationships (Fitzpatric and Vangelint, 1995).

Nie and Erlbring (2000); Pew Internet and American Life Project (2000) found that Internet use was negatively linked with its users' spending time with family and friends.

Withney (2014) identified the followings adverse effects of the Internet on teenagers;

- i. Less face-to-face communication-The more time teenagers spend using the Internet the less likely will be their desire to see and talk to with family members and friends (Shim, 2007).
- ii. Cyber bullying-Teens sometimes use the Internet to bullying other teens. Sometimes, it starts with insulting someone or sharing personal information about another teen on social network sites in an attempt to embarrass them. It can escalate to stalking and physical violence. A 2010 ABC news report- Mean Girls' Cyber Bullying Blamed for Teen Suicides-called attention to cyber bullying. The report says that this type of harassment has been responsible for teen suicides.
- iii. Time and Risk-When teens spend many hours or days using the Internet, they reduce the time they have to spend with the family and on school work and physical activities. A teenager who goes on line for two or more hours three or

more times a week faces a higher risk of falling prey to on line sexual exploitation.

- iv. On line Predators-Teens are often exposed to pornography and may found themselves prey from sexual predators after uploading sexy photos of themselves or discussing sex on line with someone they did not know.

Theoretical Framework

The time-displacement hypothesis posits that if people begin a new activity, they will have to reduce their time spent with other activities. The key assumption of the concept is that human activities have a zero-sum property – that is, people cannot begin a new activity without decreasing time devoted to prior activities because everyone has only 24 hours a day to spend. When the hypothesis is applied to Internet use, people starting to use the Internet will have to decrease time devoted to other activities. Though the hypothesis seems self-evident, the concept has long served as a theoretical basis for dozens of studies that examined how each new media technology affected people's use of traditional media (e.g., Coffin, 1948; Belson, 1961; Nie & Erbring, 2000). The displacement hypothesis was tested in three studies conducted during the introductory stage of television, when households with and without television could still be compared. Although none of the studies investigated the effect of the arrival of television on the time devoted to imaginative play, they did investigate the consequences for playtime in general. The studies by Eleanor Maccoby (1951) and Wilbur Schramm and his colleagues (1961) found that television viewing did occur at the expense of playtime in general. Because on average approximately one-third of general play is spent on imaginative play, it is likely that television viewing had a reductive effect on imaginative play as well.

In the case of creativity, there is also reason to assume that the arrival of television resulted in a Page 141 displacement of other media, such as comic books and radio (for a review see Valkenburg and van der Voort, 1994). It is, however, still unknown whether this displacement of other media leads to a reduction in creativity. Linda Faye Harrison and Tannis MacBeth Williams (1986) demonstrated that the arrival of television coincided with a decrease in children's creativity (as measured by the Wallach-Kogan creativity test), but this study did not check whether this was caused by a diminished use of radio and books by children.

Adherents of this displacement hypothesis assume that the Internet motivates adolescents to form online contacts with strangers rather than to maintain friendships with their offline peers. Because online contacts are seen as superficial weak-tie

relationships that lack feelings of affection and commitment, the Internet is believed to reduce the quality of adolescents' existing friendships and, thereby, their well-being. Conversely, other authors suggest that online communication may enhance the quality of adolescents' existing friendships and, thus, their well-being. Adherents of this stimulation hypothesis argue that more recent online communication technologies, such as IM, encourage communication with existing friends (Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, & Smallwood, 2006). Much of the time adolescents spend alone with computers is actually used to keep up existing friendships (Gross, 2004; Subrahmanyam, Kraut, Greenfield, & Gross, 2000; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007). If adolescents use the Internet primarily to maintain contacts with their existing friends, the prerequisite for a displacement effect is not fulfilled. After all, if existing friendships are maintained through the Internet, it is implausible that the Internet reduces the quality of these friendships and, thereby, adolescents' well-being (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007).

Method

This study purposely sampled 132 Senior Students of Government Comprehensive Secondary School Hong. The questionnaire was self-administered mostly over the weekend at the respondents' home. The schools were considered suitable for this research work-investigating the impact of the internet on teenagers' face- to -face communication because it has access to internet facility owned by the College of Education Hong. Furthermore, most of the students at the senior level are already on the face book and twitter regularly connect to the internet through their mobile phone and thereby maintaining regular contact with their internet friends, being a day school, all students live with their parents and therefore have natural opportunity of engaging in face- to- face communication with their immediate family members and friends.

The researchers used the senior students for this research because they were all teenagers and also because Internet use was the highest among the high school-age youths of all age groups (UCLA Center for Communication Policy, 2003). Younger people were not chosen for this study because many parents impose restrictions on their children's use of the Internet to keep them from being exposed to undesirable online content (Shim, 2007)

Data Analysis and Result Presentation

The entire questionnaire (132) administered were retrieved and used for analysis. This was partly because the teachers spoke to the students and explain the questions to them before administration.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents of Government Comprehensive Secondary School College of Education Hong

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	57	43%
Female	75	57%
Total	132	100%

The table above shows that, 22(44%) were male while 28(56%) were female. Therefore the sample contains more female than male. The sample though randomly selected confirmed the fact that the population has more females than male students.

Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
13-15	23	17.4%
16-18	109	82.5%
TOTAL	132	100%

The table above shows that 23(17%) are between the age of 13 and 15years, while a total of 109(83%) are between the ages of 16 and 18 years. Thus more than half of the sample is between the age bracket of between 16 and 18.

Access to the Internet

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	132	100%
No	0	%
Total	132	100

From the table above, all the respondents who were purposely sampled indicated that they all have access to the Internet. All of them have access to the internet facilities owned by the College of Education, Hong (The parent institution), besides some of them have the facilities at home while others browse using their mobile phones.

Internet Use.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Less than one year	43	33%
More than one year	89	67%
Total	132	100%

From the table above, a total of 43(33%) indicated that they have been using the Internet for less than one year while 89(67%) of the entire respondents have been using the Internet for more than one year.

Time spend on the Internet

Response	Frequency	Percentage
2hours a day	25	19%
3 hours a day	10	8%
3 to 5 hours a day	70	53%
More than 5 hours a day	27	20%
Total	132	100%

From the table above, the entire respondent enjoy spending more time on the Internet than they do engaging in interpersonal communication. That is to say that the more the time they spend on the Internet the less time they have for other things. This finding is supported by the opinion expressed by UCLA Centre for Communication Policy (2003) that a more alarming possibility is that teenagers now enjoy to spend more of their time on the Internet.

Use of the internet

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Send or read e mail	16	12%
Send instant messages	18	13.6%
Play game or down loading items	14	10.6%
Chatting with friends	74	56%
Seeking for information	10	7.5%
TOTAL	132	100

From the table above, it is obvious that greater percentage of the teenagers spent most of their time on the Internet chatting with friends. A total of 30(60%) affirmed this. One can therefore remark that spending much of their time on the Internet charting with friends will impact negatively on their face-to-face interaction with parents and other members of their family as rightly observed by Shim (2007).The teenagers he noted prefer to spend much of their time chatting on the Internet with friends.

Frequency of Online presence

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Several times a day	77	58%
Once a day	29	22%
3-5 days a week	05	4%
1-2 days a week	12	9%
Less often	09	7%
TOTAL	132	100

From the table above, 77(58%) of the entire respondent reported that they go on line several times a day, 29(22%) go online about once a day while 5(4%) percent go on line 3-5 times a week, 12(9%) 1-2 days a week, 9(7%) less often. This shows that teenagers spent much of their times daily on the internet chatting with friends online, thus having less time to engage in interpersonal communication with their family members which seem to weakened the bond and ties existing between them and members of their family.

Has using the Internet reduced your level of face- to face interaction with your friends?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	87	66%
No	45	34%
Total	132	100%

From the table, 87(66%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the internet affects the level of face-to-face interaction with friends, while 45(34%) believe that it does not in any way affect their interaction with friends. The respondents who said it affects the way they interact with their friends hinge it on the excuse that they spend most of their time online and even when with friends they are either chatting or watching movies and playing games online. The respondents who believe it does affect their face-to-face communication said they have created time for both. They noted that they know when to get online and when to communicate interpersonally with their parents and friends.

Has the Use of Internet decreased your desire for face-to-face communication with your family?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	107	81%
No	25	19%
Total	132	100%

The findings on the table above indicates that majority of the respondents agree that the internet has decreased their desire for face-to-face communication with their family. This is owing to the fact that they spend most of their time on the internet. This so because many have access to the internet on their mobile phones and are therefore excited at the opportunity to interact more with people outside their immediate environment. The opportunity to talk more with family and friend face-to-face is therefore limited especially if we consider the fact the location of the study area is in rural setting where interpersonal interaction is dominant.

Communication through the Internet is appealing to teenagers

Responses	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	82	62.1%
Agreed	30	22.7%
Strongly Disagreed	12	9%
Disagreed	8	6%
Total	132	100%

The table above indicates that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that communication through the Internet is appealing to teenagers, a greater number also agreed, only a negligible number as reflected on the table strongly disagreed and disagreed on the fact that communication is appealing to teenagers. What this implies therefore is the fact that communication through the internet which appears to be the main attraction to them because apart from preserving their privacy, it also affords them the opportunity to express themselves freely without hindrance. The fact that we are in a globalised world makes internet appealing to these teenagers who are in their prime and are therefore enthusiastic about anything new that will enhance their process of communication.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question 1: Has using the Internet decreased the amount of time you spend engaging in face-to-face communication with your family?

The findings have established the fact that the use of the Internet by the teenagers has reduced the amount of time they spend engaging in face to face communication with their family members. For instance, 66% reported that their face to face communication has decreased a lot 34% indicated that it does not in any way affect the way they communicate with their friends. This implies that ICT has been accepted by the teenagers who are enthusiastic about new technologies and innovations that is bound to open up the communication space for them to interact with other people across the globe. This is because as they put it” The internet has created a platform for them to interact with friends across gender and race. They indicated that the social media platform especially the use of 2go has enhanced interaction with people outside their environment”. However, for those who said it does affect communication with their family and friends argue that they now browse the internet several times daily thus limiting the time they spend with their friends, as some of them stay after school hours to browse the net. They indicated that before they get home it is already late and therefore after taking their evening meals, they chat less and retire for the night. This

finding is consistent with Nie and Erbring (2000) and National Public Radio et al. (2000) who noted that the more hours' people spend on the Internet; the less they talked with their family members and friends.

Research Question 2: Has using the Internet reduced your level of face- to face interaction with your friends?

From the findings 66% percent remarked that the level of their face to face communication with their friends has reduced while 34% indicated that it did not affect their face-to-face communication with friends. One can therefore argue that the use of the Internet by the teenagers has reduced the way they interact with their face- to-face communication with their friends. This finding consistent with Fizpatric and Vangelint (1995) who noted that the level of face to face communication has been adversely affected with teenagers depending more on the internet.

Research question 3: Has using the Internet decreased your desire for face to face communication with your family?

The findings on whether the internet decrease the desire for the teenagers to engage in face to face communication indicates that ,30 percent of the respondents reported that their desire for face to face communication with family members, 44 percent reported a little reduction while 26 percent stated their desire for face to face communication has not change. One can therefore argue that the use of the Internet has substantially reduced the desire of teenagers for face to face to communication with their family members and friends. This finding is consistent with the one by Mic Kenna, Green and Glaeson (2002) who noted that the more people rely on the Internet to interact with others, the less they engage in normal face-to-face conversation with people or the less competent they become at communicating with others which has negative impact on the quality of human interactions. This was also reinforced by Kraut et al. (1998: 1028) who argue that "by using the Internet, people are substituting poorer quality of social relationships for better relationships, that is, substituting weak ties for strong ones"

Research Question 4: What are the reasons that make communication through Internet appealing to teenagers than face to face communication?

From the data collected, most of the respondents considered communication through the Internet better than face to face communication. For instance, 62 percent of the respondent (24% strongly agreed, 38 agreed) while 38 percent (22% strongly disagreed, 16% disagreed). The findings indicate that they prefer the Internet communication because it brought them much closer to their friends, help them to make new friends

particularly friends from other races, they mention the fact that making friends with the whites makes it appealing especially the prospect of travelling outside some day. They say it gives them limitless access to the world and above all, it helps them to maintain their privacy. They said privacy in this sense means that unless they decide to make known their discussion nobody else will know, because their accounts are protected by passwords. Therefore, teenagers find communication through the Internet more appealing compared to the face- to- face communication, due to the confidentiality of internet when compared to face to face communication and the prospect of establishing friendship with people outside the shores of Nigeria and Africa. In addition, they also mentioned the benefit of improve communication, especially written communication and knowledge in the use of the internet.

Conclusion

The following conclusions are therefore drawn that, face to face communication with their family members has reduced as a result of the use of Internet by the teenagers who appear to spend more time on the internet than engaging in face to face communication with their family members.

The use of the Internet by the teenagers has reduced their face to face communication with their friends. These is partly because they spend more time on the internet and therefore have little time for interaction with their friends, perhaps because the internet offers them the platform for personal interactions with many people of diverse background around the world.

The use of the Internet has substantially reduced the desire of teenagers for face to face communication with their family members and friends. Since they spend more time on the internet and hardly have time for face to face communication with the family due to the time spend engaging others on the internet.

The teenagers also prefer the Internet communication because it brought them much closer to their friends, help them to make new friends, gives them limitless access to the world and above all, it helps them to maintain their privacy. Therefore, teenagers find communication through the Internet more appealing compared to the face- to- face communication. This may perhaps be due to the confidentiality of internet as compared to face to face communication.

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